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ABSTRACT

This guide provides information about an 8-day outdoor education experience required for third-year teacher education majors at Northern Illinois University (NIU). The residential program is held at the Lorado Taft Field Campus of NIU. The guide addresses the values of outdoor education and the benefits for both teachers and students. General information concerning the residential experience is provided. Course objectives are: (1) to become more familiar with the concept of outdoor education; (2) to become acquainted with the Lorado Taft Field Campus and its resources; (3) to discover outdoor activities and teaching techniques; (4) to develop positive attitudes about the outdoors; (5) to get to know one's self and peer group; and (6) to gain an understanding of residential outdoor education. Participants choose from a curriculum consisting of experiences in natural resource identification, ecology, map and compass, environmental values, and other subject matters related to student interests. A sample outdoor education schedule and a list of activities are presented, including the study of trees, "color poetry," and bird study. Also included is a list of what students need to bring for the experience; conservation practices to maintain the natural habitat of Lorado Taft; and tasks to be completed by students before leaving the campus. (LP)

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Discover and Experience Outdoor Education
Lorado Taft Field Campus
Oregon, Illinois

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Junior Experience Information Packet

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Maps

Must we always teach our children with books? Let them look at the mountains and the stars up above. Let them look at the beauty of the waters and the trees and flowers on the earth. They will begin to think, and to think is the beginning of a real education.

David Polis

Preface

Welcome to the first portion of an eight day clinical experience in outdoor education. This three day visit to the Lorado Taft Field Campus presents an opportunity to experience a unique learning environment. During your senior year you will complete your eight day clinical experience with a chance to student teach in the outdoors.

Lorado Taft is a resident center where teachers, students and disciplines meet. The experientially based curriculum is designed to enhance, intensify and expand any subject matter. The outdoor residential program also supports a number of other purposeful goals. Along with curriculum enrichment the program aims to promote social growth, environmental awareness, and individual growth. The staff at Lorado Taft offers you an invitation to experience and discover the benefits of teaching in the outdoors.

We strongly believe that much can be gained from the outdoor education experience. But don't just take our word for it. Comments by previous Junior block students may shed some light on what to expect when you experience the Lorado Taft Field Campus:

> "Just being outdoors, getting away from 'the books!' Learning in a relaxed atmosphere and a fun way that involved me!"
>
> ". . . became better friends with the people in my group and learned different ways to teach."
>
> "I saw a spider catch and prepare a grasshopper for the first time."
>
> ". . . being with the kids all day let me see how they 'really' are."
>
> "I enjoyed it immensely, I thought previously I would hate it."
>
> "I now feel more comfortable with my Junior block members. I feel I know myself as well."

Some Basics

OUTDOOR EDUCATION...

... is the use of educational experiences in the out-of-doors to aid in the development of the individual.

... is teaching in the out-of-doors those items which can be taught best in the out-of-doors.

... is the real thing in context and not a substitute.

... is an experience based program and not a bookish one.

... is in harmony with the aims of child growth and development.

... helps the individual become more aware of the environment and its many interactions.

TEACHERS...

... usually cannot teach effectively in the outdoors until they have had sound outdoor education experiences themselves.

... should examine their own teaching methods and styles to see how they can more frequently utilize direct, meaningful experiences.

... should use the outdoors as a laboratory for human growth and development.

... often discover how to improve their own teaching strategies and approaches as a result of an outdoor education experience.

... do not have to be a science teacher, ecologist or botanist to teach outdoor education.

CHILDREN...

... usually find the outdoors stimulating, invigorating, interesting, friendly, and frightening.

... usually grow academically, personally, and socially during a resident outdoor education experience.

... often relate more positively to their peers as a result of outdoor education experiences.

Why Outdoor Education?

Educational experiences outside the classroom go by several names: outdoor education, field trips, community studies, excursions, etc. There seems to be two points of view concerning the value and importance of outdoor experiences. Some consider them to be essential and some consider them to be a waste of time or a needless frill. We firmly agree with the first position and want to point out some of the reasons why we feel that way. Our doing so may convince those who are not committed and allow us to provide a few pointers to help them in their efforts.

Educators use outdoor experiences to give students a feeling of community and to help make them conscious of their environment. It is at the elementary school level or earlier at which children become aware of their environment and make the connections between themselves and everything else. Unless they get outdoor experiences in the community they are forced to work from a narrow base and from concepts that are only as clear as books and television can make them. One can hardly expect a child to understand ideas of ecosystems or wilderness until he has experienced, first hand, some of the elements of which they are composed.

Educators use outdoor experiences to help students really understand. Partial understanding is the best we can expect to get when students try to deal with ecological and environmental needs and conditions indoors. So very much is missed and so many things are hazy and vague until one really sees it for oneself. The size and magnitude of the Rocky Mountains - or the corn fields of central Illinois don't really hit home until one visits them. Nor, does much of what we teach about environment. Concepts of the volume of solid waste produced by a city or the silt in the Mississippi River are essential - and so very vague until the student has had experiences outdoors upon which to base his understanding.

Educators use the outdoors to provide students with contrast experience. Efforts to arouse concern in children or adults who have never seen flowing water other than the "canal" are likely to bear little fruit. We just don't get concerned about much of anything unless we know the alternative. If children are to get interested in clean water or clean air they have to first experience clean water and clean air. Live all your life on a noisy street corner and you become deaf - figuratively and literally. The big danger is that we will become so accustomed to the polluted condition that we will accept it as the only way. When children (and legislators) of Missoula, Montana, got a look at the clean air across the mountains, they got angry about conditions at home. When Mary learns first-hand about wading and fishing in the stream visited on the field trip, she may get angry about the condition of the Des Plaines River near home.

Educators use the outdoors - the community - as a place in which their students can work. The outdoors is a place in which students can do things. Some believe that the "fort building urge" that many 9 and 10 year-olds get results from a psychological need to do something. While building imaginary forts to hold off an imaginary foe may be great, it may just be that they could use that "urge" to better advantage - such as cleaning up and "saving" a section of the river that flows through town - or operating a recycling center - or planting some trees or shrubs for shade and beauty. In doing so, they might develop a real feeling about what they have done.

Finally, educators use outdoor experiences to help their students gain in responsibility. Actually, responsibility is what education is all about - responsibility to one's self, to our fellow man and to planet Earth. By involving students in experiences outside the classroom, educators help them understand some of the ways in which we are dependent upon each other and upon our planet. It is the irresponsible act that has caused many of the problems we face, and it is the responsible act that will help us ameliorate our negative impact. Educators have known for a long time that when students participate in decision making (political and otherwise) community service, and community betterment activities, they gain the experience and know-how that they will need to function responsibly and effectively throughout their lives.

The Junior Experience in Outdoor Education 1991-1992

Participation in the three-day Taft Outdoor Education Experience is a requirement during the second professional semester. It will be followed by a five day student teaching experience during your senior year.

Time: Students will be expected to arrive at the field campus no later than 9:00 a.m. on the first day and leave the field campus at 3:00 p.m. on the last day.

Cost: The sum of $75.93 ($35.93 for Taft program, room & board and $40.00 as a clinical education fee) has been assessed as a class fee for CIEE 383, and the charge will appear on your regular tuition and fees statement. Residents of NIU dormitories (Neptune, Grant, Stevenson, Gilbert, Douglas) may receive a partial refund of $6.50 (raw food portion) by filling in the information on the Taft roster so the refund can be processed. Those not enrolled in CIEE 383 will pay for room and board at the Lorado Taft Field Campus. Transportation fees are not refundable.

Transportation: Buses will transport students to and from Taft Campus. They leave Graham Hall at 8:00 a.m.. If driving to Taft, go north on Glidden to Highway 64, west on 64 to the edge of the town of Oregon. Turn right before crossing the Rock River and watch for signs leading to campus at the far end of Lowden State Park.

What to Bring: Dress is informal and you will be outdoors even though the weather is stormy. Hiking boots are desirable and should be brought if you have them. In addition to personal items, you will need a sleeping bag (or sheets, blankets, and pillowcase), towels, soap, pencils, note pad and alarm clock.

Purpose: 1. To become more familiar with the concept of outdoor education.

2. To become acquainted with LTFC and its resources.
3. To discover outdoor activities and teaching techniques useful in reaching education goals.
4. To develop positive attitudes about the outdoors.
5. To get to know one's self and peer group.
6. To gain understanding of resident outdoor education.

Expectations: The curriculum consists of experiences chosen from among the following: natural resource identification, ecology, map and compass, environmental values, and other subject matter. While at the Taft Campus you will participate in a wide range of learning activities such as (1) orienteering, (2) river study, (3) pioneering, (4) animal tracking, (5) nature crafts, (6) outdoor math, (7) geology, (8) group building challenges, (9) lesson planning, (10) star study and (11) campfire participation. Your interests will help to determine some of the program.

In order to achieve the objectives it is important that students commit themselves to the entire time allocated for the experience and participate in the activities. This means that students are expected to remain on site throughout the entire three days and two nights.

Facilities: Taft Campus facilities are quite comfortable for a group living situation. Students are housed in modern dormitories. Food is served in the dining hall with a panoramic view of the Rock River. Facilities include classrooms, dormitories, a craft shop, a well equipped library, and 140 acres of fields and forests.

Orientation Meeting: Orientation meetings will be scheduled through your CIEE 383 class during the first weeks of the semester.

For further information contact:

Faculty Chair
Outdoor Teacher Education
Lorado Taft Field Campus
P. O. Box 299
Oregon, IL 61061

(815) 753-0206 or 732-2111

Sample Schedule

First Day

9:00	Arrival Orientation to Campus/Activity Period
12:00	(Monday) lunch
12:30	(Wednesday) lunch
1:30 - 4:00	Afternoon activity period (may be divided into activity periods)
4:00 - 5:00	Rest/Recreation/Reflection
5:00	Table setters to dining hall, others prepare for dinner
6:45	Evening activities begin (may include night hikes, dancing, campfire)
9:00	Free time

Second day

7:00	Rise and shine
7:30	Table setters to dining hall
8:00	Breakfast
9:00 - 11:30	Morning activity period(s)
12:00	Lunch
1:00 - 4:00	Afternoon activity period(s)
4:00 - 5:00	Rest/Recreation/Reflection
5:00	Table setters to dining hall
5:30	Dinner
6:45	Evening activities
9:00	Free time

Third Day

7:00	Rise and shine
7:30	Table setters to dining hall
8:00	Breakfast
8:30	Pack/Clean-up/Prepare to leave
9:15 - 11:00	Morning activity period
11:30	Lunch
12:30 - 2:30	Afternoon activity period
2:30	Summation and evaluation
3:00	Depart

A FACT LIST FOR A STUMP

Before it decomposes, a stump can offer clues about its past. Every year a tree adds a growth ring to the wood. When the tree is cut down, the rings are seen as concentric circles on the stump. Rings vary in size depending on many environmental factors, including weather, injuries, competition, etc. Studying a stump can be an interesting way to combine history and biology.

1. Approximately how long ago was the tree felled? _____

   In what year was that? _____

2. Why was it cut down? _____

3. Which way did it fall? _____

4. How old was the tree when it fell? _____

5. Was the tree's growth the same each year? _____

6. If not, in which years did the tree make good growth? _____

   _____ In which years did it make poor growth?

   _____

7. Are there signs of injury to the tree when alive? _____

   If so, what are they? _____

   When did the injuries occur? _____

8. Locate important years on the stump by counting back years of growth in the rings. _____

9. Find and list signs of decay. _____

   _____

10. Take a rubbing of the stump <u>to take back with you.</u>

11. Find out about the weather and the history of those years when unusual events seemed to happen to the tree (a forest fire, logging, unusual amounts of rainfall, etc.)

COLOR POETRY

This lesson helps students develop a greater appreciation for the variety of colors and sounds found in nature. The students are asked to make detailed observations of the sights and sounds that surround them. The lesson can be adapted to any environment. Four our purposes it goes like this:

1. Give each student fifteen minutes to adjust to the novelty of new environment. Let them explore a bit.

2. Give the following assignment. Ask each student to try to find twelve colors and five sounds in his/her environment. More is O.K.

3. Each student is asked to describe where they saw each of the colors in relation to themselves.

   For example: blue sky over me
   green water in front of me (prepositional phrase)

4. Each student is also asked to write one final line about the environment. This line can't be any longer than the longest previous line of description.

An example from John E. Ferry's article from Journal of Outdoor Education.

(4) A green manzanita tree in front of me
Green blue and brown water in front of me
Brown pine needles all around me
White fresh clean snow all around me.

(4) Brown pine cones in the trees
Green mountain mystery beside me
Bright green leaves behind me
A few white clouds in the sky.

(4) Colorful rock all around me
A white buoy in the water
A yellow and black bee in front of me
Dirty white snow at my feet.

(5) Leaves rustling around me
Birds singing above me
The winds swishing by
The water moving toward me
The snow melting everywhere.

(1) It is pretty but won't last long because of pollution.

Sheryl

Perhaps the best known color poetry is Hailstone and Halibut Bones by Mary O'Neil.

BIRD STUDY

Materials:

1. One pair of binoculars per child
2. Bird seed
3. Bird traps
4. Sufficient copies of a) Birds of North America
   b) A Field Guide to the Birds

Method:

1. Take pupils to the area where binoculars are stored and give one pair to each pupil.

   a) ask the pupils not to look through them until requested to do so
   b) move to an area from which the sun is not visible
   c) have pupils zero the right hand eyepiece (this will not need further adjustment for most children)
   d) explain that binoculars can be spread apart and that they will spread theirs later to the distance that is correct for them (start with the binoculars as close together as possible)
   e) elicit the word focus and discuss its meaning and why one must do this each time the binoculars are used
   f) have the pupils focus on distant and close objects for practice and to set the correct individual spread.
   g) explain 1 - why one must not look directly at the sun with binoculars and 2 - why one must not walk along looking through binoculars

2. The remainder of the lesson except for the closing may be carried out in any order so long as each stop is related to its predecessors.

3. Discuss the definition of bird. It is important that the discussion follow the Socratic approach and that <u>all</u> answers be rewarded and used to move toward the final definition. The simplest definition is that a bird is a feathered animal.

4. Go on a bird hike and for each bird or type of bird found do the following:

   a) have the pupils use their binoculars to sight the bird
   b) elicit the major colors paying particular attention to beak, face, head, back, cheek, breast, tail, wings, and feet. It is o.k. for colors to vary slightly according to the viewer.
   c) note any other dominant features such as a crest.
   d) have the pupils identify the bird according to the guide books and discuss the relationship of the name to anything that has been observed.
   e) discuss the significance of where it has been found.
   f) discuss possible reasons for the birds actions which they have observed.
   g) each time the bird is seen again during the lesson, review the most memorable means each child finds most diagnostic in identifying the birds.

Information for "Juniors"
Coming to Taft Campus

Three days at NIU's Outdoor Education Center can be one of your most exciting and meaningful experiences in teacher education. For each of you it is a chance not only for individual growth, but also for your class to create a community in which learning and living are intermeshed.

A. Before You Come - what to bring? Use your own judgement depending on the season and weather. Here are some suggestions:

OUTER CLOTHING

Rain coat
Warm jacket
Warm hat
Gloves
Boots
3-4 pr. heavy socks
2 pr. shoes/boots
2 pr. warm slacks/jeans
(preferably old)
Sweater/sweatshirt
Cotton shirts/blouses
Handkerchief
Alarm Clock

BEDDING

(each person must bring his own sleeping bag or two sheets, two warm blankets, and a pillow case.) [we provide pillows]

NIGHT CLOTHES & TOILET ARTICLES

Towels/washcloths
Toothbrush and toothpaste
Soap and soap box
Comb/brush

OTHER OPTIONALS

You might consider bringing a flashlight, musical instrument, notebook, pens, camera/film.

B. Taft is a branch of Northern Illinois University.

1. Students majoring in elementary education, physical education, industry and technology, and secondary professional education participate in clinical experiences in outdoor teacher education at the Field Campus. Elementary Education seniors engage in an outdoor education practicum involving school children.

2. You will be expected to stay at the Taft Campus during the entire three day period. Students may leave the campus only under exceptional circumstances and with the prior approval of Taft faculty.

C. Conservation Practices: To maintain the natural habitat of Taft:

1. Students must remain on regular paths when climbing the river bluffs. Climbing steep slopes leads to erosion of the slope.

2. Use of live animal traps (mammal or bird) must be supervised by a Taft faculty member.

3. Smoking in the forest should be done with extreme caution. Our fire control equipment is inadequate to deal with a forest fire. **No smoking in university buildings.**

4. Picking of wildflowers and other plants (even fungi) should be done only with the consent of the staff members.

5. Help gather litter!

D. Branding Board: Before leaving, each group is asked to design its own group logo (about 3" by 3") to symbolize the stay at Taft. This "brand" is burned onto a board that is displayed over the serving counter in the dining hall. A little "something" to leave behind.

E. Before Leaving: Please think of the group arriving after you. Sweep dorm rooms, clean up the Craft Shop, return books and field equipment to the IMC, and please report any broken or used up materials.